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AUTHOR	Lipsitz, Joan
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ABSTRACT

Later marriage ages, longer life expectancy, higher divorce rates, and the feminization of poverty will all figure in the economic future of modern girls. Values about work, marriage, and motherhood are in flux during adolescence, and the messages they receive are often contradictory. Steps must be taken to educate girls to make clearheaded and realistic decisions that have lifetime consequences. The high teenage birth rate demonstrates that few young girls realize that delaying childbearing and marriage would have startling effects on their future economic well-being. Although the number of women in the labor force increased by 173 percent between 1947 and 1980, they are still underrepresented in the physical sciences, engineering, and business: women cluster in low-paying, traditionally female jobs, and the average earnings ratio of women to men has not risen over the last 30 years. Girls and young women today should receive guidance so these trends can be reversed in the future. More work needs to be done to broaden the understanding of female development during adolescence. Girls should receive better treatment during the following four periods: (1) infancy; (2) adolescence, when they are trained to be compliant and dependent; (3) their first menstrual period; and (4) the stage of adolescence when girls seek both autonomy and interdependence. A list of references is included. (BJV)

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The Economic Future of Girls and Young Women*

Joan Lipsitz

"...the man ...must encounter all peril and trial; to him therefore must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error; often he must be wounded or subdued; often misled and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need not enter danger, nor temptation, nor cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of the home - it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division."

So said John Ruskin in 1865. I wonder if it sounded even less familiar to women living in the England Dickens knew and wrote about than it does to us today. I wonder, also, how many women are wounded today by this fervent but utterly false social wish of the 19th century, a wish whose legacy remains with us to this day.

The myth is best summarized by Mary Ellen Verheyden-Hilliard, author of "Cracking the Glass Slipper," who says, "Probably the reason it is so difficult to educate a girl for independence is because we all suffer from the Cinderella Syndrome, the belief that every girl when she leaves school at whatever age -- high school dropout, high school graduate, college graduate, or Ph.D. -- is only going to work for a little while until she is discovered by the Prince and carried off to live in the castle (or the apartment as the case may be) where she will be kept busy taking care of the princes and the princesses and she will never need to work or want to work outside the home again. And she and the Prince will live happily ever after, until they are both 100 years old, at which time they will both die on the same day." This myth, as the author says, is "cavalier at best and cruel at worst."[1] If this is myth, what is reality?

Here are some facts about marriage and divorce. Using life expectancies of white women, which give the most optimistic scenario, Ray Marshall, former Secretary of Labor, reports that "in 1900, the life expectancy of a white woman at age 20 was about 64 years. She could expect, on the average, to be widowed at 52 and to die before her last child left home. In 1980, a white woman who married at 22 could expect to live about 79 years, and to stop having children at age 30. Her last child would leave home when she was 48. However, there was a 47 percent chance that her first marriage would end in divorce."[2] Thus, as others have noted, the prospect is that two-thirds of women's adult years will be spent without children in the home and half to two-thirds without a husband.[3] The divorce rate is up 127 percent since 1960 and rising -- and only one out of five

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women in divided families where there is a legal settlement receives child support from the fathers. So much for the Prince.

In the 1970s, for the first time in American history, more marriages ended every year in divorce than in death. Delays in first marriages plus divorce have led at each census to an increasingly lower proportion of women who are currently married.[4] I wonder how many of today's Cinderellas know these prospects as they contemplate their futures.

I wonder also how many of them know the term, "the feminization of poverty." In 1950, a little over one-third of female family heads were responsible for the care of dependent children. By 1980, almost two-thirds of female-headed families included children under 18.[5] The economic status of a startling percentage of households headed by women is a statistical disaster scene that reflects lives of struggle, hardship, and deprivation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the poverty of teenage mothers.

Contrary to common opinion, the teenage birthrate has declined, which is surprising, since we have ample evidence of an increase in sexual activity among adolescents. In fact, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, by age 13, one girl in 50 has had sexual intercourse at least once; by age 14, one in ten; by age 15, one in five, by age 16, one in three; by age 17, one in two; and by age 19, two in three.[6] But while sexual activity among adolescents increases and initiates at earlier ages, the birth rate per 1000 women ages 15 to 19 is decreasing steadily.[7] This is good news indeed, and it tells us that information and services do have an impact on what sometimes seems to be a frustratingly intractable problem.

At the same time, however, and deeply distressing, "while the teenage birthrate has been declining, the incidence of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers has been increasing. In 1978, over one-half of all births to teenagers were to women who were unmarried, compared to 17 percent in 1960."[8] The rise in fertility outside of marriage is particularly pronounced among black women. In 1979, more black births occurred outside than within marriage.[9]

I wonder how many young girls know that delaying childbearing may have startling effects on their future economic well-being. A few lines from Bianchi and Spain's report, American Women: Three Decades of Change, need to be seared on their consciousness: "Women who become mothers before age 21 tend to finish fewer years of school than those who have children later, and these young mothers show no evidence of catching up in educational attainment at later ages...Because education is so closely linked to labor force opportunities, lower attainment often translates into lower earnings later in life. Early childbearers also have larger families and a higher incidence of poverty than women who bear children later in life." In addition, and extremely important, "as much as three-fourths of the post-marriage educational gap might be closed if women married as late as men."[10]

Here are some facts about education. The high school graduation ratio has been consistently higher for girls than for boys.[11]

Moreover, "women are increasing their share of the professional degrees awarded, and undergraduate degrees are converging for men and women." But, as Ray Marshall points out, this means that "the higher levels of educational attainment intensify competition for good jobs, placing those with limited education or training at a serious labor market disadvantage."[12] In addition, even though women have closed the gap in college enrollment and are starting to improve their record in the attainment of higher degrees, they are still clustering their majors in education, the humanities, and health sciences, and not in the physical sciences, engineering, and business. There are areas of distinct change. For instance, women, while still very much in the minority in male-dominated fields like medicine and law, have increased their proportion so that currently 20 percent of all law degrees are earned by women, in contrast to the five percent of 1970, and almost 20 percent of medical degrees go to women, double the percentage of 1970. There is, however, no parallel increase in engineering and physics, at either the bachelors or doctoral levels.[13]

Why does this matter? It matters because young women today face a long working life. Their work will be important to them and to their families. In fact, for many, whether the sole support of the children or in a two-wage-earner family, their income will be essential to the family's well-being. And it will be essential to their self-definition. As Ray Marshall says, "Despite talk about the decline of the work ethic, most people want to work. Work is both the way most adults identify themselves and the central organizing principle of our lives."[14]

The dramatic increase in labor force participation of women is considered the greatest revolution in the history of American labor. The statistics are breathtaking. Between 1947 and 1980, the number of women in the labor force increased by 173 percent. The greatest increase in labor participation rates in the 1960s and 1970s was among women aged 20 to 44. In 1980, 62 percent of mothers of school-age children were in the labor force.[15] And perhaps you saw the figures that were headlined in the news in March: 45 percent of women with children under one year of age are now in the labor force. Cinderella is leaving the princes and princesses in the day-care center or with alternate care-givers. Even if the Prince is there, in only 31 percent of the cases is he the only one working.[16]

Girls and young women may not know what the future holds for them, how long and hard they will work outside the home. And yet, interestingly, they are already working. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, around 48 percent of teenagers had a job in 1960, but in 1979 almost 60 percent worked. In 1981, a 16-year-old male was three times more likely to work part-time than in 1960; a teenaged female was ten times more likely.[17] This is not a picture of an unsocialized, irresponsible, devil-may-care group of adolescents rejecting the adult work ethic. They are getting their taste of work that has little redeeming value except the paycheck. And while the stereotype is of youngsters working for "wheels," as they put it, to pay for car insurance, many are working for the survival of their families, especially in low-income households.[18]

What messages are they deriving from this work experience? We do not know. But one question gives us a disturbing inkling of a connection that is not being made between the present and the future. In 1978, Mary Keyserling asked a group of teenage girls how many of them thought they would be working at the age of 40. Most of them replied, "About 10 percent." In fact, over 60 percent of women age 40 are now working, and in 20 years the figure may well be 70 percent.[19] How are we to prepare girls for this reality? The Cinderella myth persists. Perhaps even John Ruskin's myth persists of the home as a shelter from all injury, terror, doubt and division, a place of Peace.

I want to return for a moment to my question about why it matters what young women major in, assuming they make it to college, and why it matters what their graduate degrees are in, assuming they go on in their studies, and why it matters that it is projected that by 1987, 71 percent of doctoral degrees earned by women will still be in such fields as education, library science, fine and applied arts, English, and foreign languages.[20] It matters because it perpetuates a persistent pattern, whether in low- or higher-paying jobs, of women clustering in traditionally female jobs that are lower paying all the way up the line.

The bottom of the line is what is sometimes referred to as the "girls' ghetto," a pattern of occupational segregation by sex in marginal, low-wage occupations. Labor force participation rates may be up, but women are still concentrated in relatively few occupations. In the middle are women classified as professional or technical workers who tend to be in the lower paying, traditionally female jobs. In 1981, half in this category were either nurses or elementary or secondary school teachers. While women constituted 44 percent of all workers in March 1980, they filled 81 percent of clerical and 61 percent of other service occupations. They were highly under-represented in managerial occupations. This is not likely to change radically in the near future, if we are hearing young girls correctly. It is fair to summarize the literature on sex differences in adolescents' aspirations by saying that boys aspire to higher levels of education and occupation and expect more than girls do to attain their aspirations. Even though this is changing somewhat, occupational choices, in terms of aspirations, remain sex-stereotyped. Study after study shows occupational aspirations and expectations that are highly differentiated by sex. In one recent study of 11th grade inner-city girls, approximately two-thirds of the girls identified their tentative occupational choices as being in traditionally women's fields.[21] Several years from now, these girls will be reflected in the litany of summaries about the role of women in the workforce that sound like this: "Although there are many changes in women's workforce participation and in ages of marriage and fertility rates, these have not been reflected thus far in the desegregation of occupations and equity in earnings."[22]

Now we are at the heart of the matter: earnings. Let me tell you the most shocking news first: the average earnings of women in relation to men have not risen over the past 30 years.[23] In fact, the earnings gap for white men and women has increased since 1955. Looking at the average weekly earnings of men and women in 1981, in

the 91 occupations in which there were enough men and women to compare earnings, "there was not one in which women's median earnings were as much [as] or more than men's."[25] Looking at blacks and whites (I regret that I do not have parallel figures for Hispanics), both black and white men with eight years of schooling earn more than black or white women with one-to-three years of college. In fact, men with eight years of schooling earn more than women with four years of college.[26] And getting degrees is not enough to offset this difference. When men and women have the same educational attainment, their economic rewards are still widely disparate. For instance, one study conducted in 1980 found that seven years after graduating from Harvard Law School, 25 percent of men and only one percent of women were partners in law firms. The salary differentials were stunning, regardless of marital or family status: for instance average salaries of graduates of the Harvard School of Public Health were $37,800 a year for men and $21,300 for women.[27]

You can control for educational attainment; you can control for marital status; you can control for childbearing. There are still consistent differences, always in the same direction, always less than subtle, between the earnings of men and of women. In the end, after we talk about education, training, skill requirements, patterns of women's entry and exit from the labor force, in the end, we have to talk about discrimination. I have a quotation on the wall facing me as I sit at my desk in my office back in Chapel Hill. I got it from the Ford Foundation close to a decade ago. It is unfortunately as pertinent today as it was in 1975. Then Commissioner of Education for New York State Nyquist, deploring the fact that among school superintendents in 758 upstate districts of New York there was not one woman, made the "Quotation of the Day" in the N.Y. Times of October 8, 1975 by saying, "Equality is not when a female Einstein gets promoted to assistant professor, equality is when a female schlemiel moves ahead as fast as a male schlemiel."

Girls and young women are making choices over which we and they can have some influence. Some of these choices are very complex, and I want to look at these complexities in a minute. We must, however, acknowledge that beyond these choices are structural, institutionalized choices that are being made for young women, choices about their economic futures over which they have no control. This lack of control is our legacy to them. It is neither appropriate or realistic for us to put the burden on them of changing this legacy through the choices they make in the innocence, naivete, and inexperience of youth.

I realize that statistics can be deadening, although I hope that this review of statistics on marriage and divorce, on childbearing, on education, on labor force participation, on occupational distribution, and on earnings, is testimony enough to the collision of the Cinderella myth with reality that no more need be said about princes, castles, or the place of Peace.

But is this the message that girls and young women receive from us? I don't think that girls and young women receive a message from us. I think that they receive many messages, many conflicting

messages, and these messages reflect unresolved cultural problems that are deep-seated and painful to us. So, let us turn away from numbers and look at girls. When we do this, we will come up against what appear to be unresolvable dilemmas about the future for girls and young women.

The first thing we must acknowledge is how little we know about the development of adolescent girls. Jill Rierdan, a psychologist at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, says, "I think it's interesting and important to realize that we probably know significantly more about (the) transition from girlhood to womanhood in certain tribes in the South Seas and in certain tribes in South America, than we do of girls in the United States."[28]

This is changing now, which is important for two reasons. First, we need to know more about girls as they negotiate their way through these critical years in their lives if we are to help them. Second, the attention that is finally being paid sends a signal to researchers and practitioners and policymakers that girls are indeed important. And this in turn will have its effect on the way girls experience their adolescent years. During adolescence, young people consciously explore their uniqueness as individuals and their relatedness to other human beings. Adolescents depend upon others to reflect to them a positive, realistic image of themselves that can be integrated with their personal inner image. They are dependent upon society to have a coherent sense of who they are, a coherence with which, and in opposition to which, they can define themselves.[29] Girls, then, are deeply vulnerable to our lack of knowledge about female development during adolescence. Perhaps the growing attention to them will lead to greater coherence and to clearer messages about who they are and who they might be.

Meanwhile, the messages are unclear or conflicted. I believe there are four critical times when girls get derailed on their way to womanhood. First, signals are given very early to girls and boys by parents and caregivers who react to infants' and toddlers' behavior based on the sex of the child. A boy who begins to walk is praised for his accomplishment. A boy who is crying is diverted into action instead of having his feelings acknowledged. A girls' feelings are acknowledged, but she is more likely to be praised for her attractiveness than for her accomplishments. The boy is told, "My, how well you walk." The girl is told, "My, how pretty you look today."

Needless to say, I am painting with a very bold brush here and greatly oversimplifying, to get to the second point of derailment. During adolescence, there seems to be an acceleration of the differences in the way adults socialize girls and boys. This is referred to by some as "gender intensification" - intensification of chaperonage, of vigilance, and of authoritarian behavior on the part of parents. On the part of girls, we find what has been referred to as the "chameleon syndrome," the increased accommodation of girls to their environment, when they perceive it as being disapproving of inappropriate sex-role behavior. Chameleon-like, girls accommodate by becoming more compliant and dependent. In addition, girls show

reduced risk-taking behavior in tasks involving personal achievement. They experience greater disruption of self-esteem than boys do, especially during the onset of puberty. They also, and this is a point I will come back to, show another sign of gender intensification: they maintain more sophisticated and intimate friendships than boys do. Their capacity for intimacy changes more during adolescence than it does for boys.[30]

A major developmental issue for girls is integrating the radical change in the way they experience their bodies during adolescence. Overnight girls experience a difference in their lives with their first menstrual period at age 10, 12 or 13. This is the third critical point when girls' experience diverges from boys'. Unlike boys, something dramatic happens to girls and their sense of themselves at menarche, and it is not inherently a positive or negative something. But for many girls, menstruation is a secret, an embarrassment, and all too often, something for which they are unprepared and with which they receive little help. You may think it is strange to be talking about this in a conference on the economic future of girls and young women. I did at first. But on reflection, I decided that we cannot help girls negotiate their way towards the roles of womanhood without looking at this critical point where girls get derailed. And this one is relatively unexplored, which is incredible, since it is one of the few universals in girls' lives. It is also unexplored in relation to teenage pregnancy and adolescent childbearing. Some people suggest, and I am one of them, that because the onset of puberty is so important for girls, early adolescence is an important predictor of how they will function later as adults. Our failure to be attentive to girls during the onset of puberty, to their lowered self-esteem then, to their unsettled sense of their bodies, is a serious oversight in our attempts to help girls form a confident sense of themselves in the present and the future.

There are other critical developmental tasks during adolescence besides the physical. One of the key issues in adolescent development, and the fourth issue I want to underscore, is autonomy. It is a truism in the media and even in most developmental literature that adolescents must stridently assert their autonomy in order to separate from their families. No matter how many research studies tell us otherwise, no matter how many youth polls report that most young people respect and admire their parents and turn to them for advice, for values, for love, no matter how much we talk about a continuum of detachment and separation, the stereotype of hostility and rebellion prevails. So does the stereotype of autonomy as concerning only independence to the exclusion of interdependence.

Several researchers on women's development are starting to observe differences between girls and boys in the meaning of autonomy itself, and are starting to see that autonomy for girls relates to interconnectedness as well as independence. Let me personalize this for a minute. When my daughter was conducting a very small study in order to meet the requirements of a B.A. in sociology, she looked at the differences in aspirations and expectations in fifth- and sixth-grade girls and boys. This was a tiny study. Nonetheless, she came home during Easter break in her senior year in something of a

panic, because the data just wouldn't fall into recognizable place, and her advisor thought she had nothing there at all. In fact, he was less than interested in the subject to begin with.

As we sat on her bed one night talking about the mess she seemed to be in, I became more and more intrigued by the data. Girls were saying they wanted to be doctors and lawyers. It appeared that girls had "broken the glass slipper," that the revolution had taken hold at last. And yet, something was there, in answers to other questions, that seemed not to fit at all. Girls were saying that they wanted to be doctors or lawyers because the fields interested them and because they wanted to help people, whereas boys wanted to make money and to have a good time. The more things changed, it seemed, the more they stayed the same.

Carol Tittle, who has conducted very interesting research on aspirations of inner city girls and boys, asked her sample of 800 11th graders about their occupational values. And guess what? Males gave higher rankings to high income, leadership, and leisure. Females gave higher rankings to helping others, variety, and field of interest. Another study in 1978 reported similar sex differences: boys valued high income and leadership, girls valued helping others.[31] When I was reviewing the research in preparation for this talk, I called my daughter to tell her about these studies. She felt vindicated, triumphant, and still bitter that her advisor had shown so little interest. "He just didn't think the subject was important," she said to me.

Well, it is very important, because adolescence, as Konopka, right here at the University of Minnesota, has told us for years, is a time not just of autonomy, but also of commitment, not just of independence, but, as she put it in 1973, a time of moving into "the true interdependence of men."[32] Perhaps she should have said "of women," given what we are learning about girls' development. Following these themes of commitment and interdependence, Carol Gilligan, at Harvard, has written a provocative book, In a Different Voice. The different voice is the voice of girls and young women, who define themselves in a context of human relationships and judge themselves in terms of their ability to care.[33] During adolescence, girls appear to deal with concerns about separation on the one hand, and with connectedness to others and responsiveness to feelings on the other hand. We know very little about this line of development or its origins. We are beginning to know that it exists.[34] Adolescent girls do not separate in the same way that adolescent boys do. They do not seek only autonomy; they also seek connectedness. Because maturity is too often equated with autonomy, one of girls' strengths, their insistence on the interdependence of human beings, is judged to be a weakness. As Gilligan says, the importance of interconnectedness and interdependence is lost in a society that values separation more than attachment, and sees assertive and aggressive activity as more powerful than nurturance[35] -- in other words, a society that hears an inferior voice, not a different and equally valuable voice.

I said earlier that our messages to girls reflect unresolved, painful conflicts. The first source of our confusion is our

ambivalence about female values and work. We all want our children to have good teachers, we all want good nurses for ourselves and our loved ones. But nurturance is not economically valued in this society, so we also are counseling girls to get out of the traditionally female occupations that give so few professional and economic rewards. Girls are increasingly caught in dilemmas between what they value and what is valued by others. Our ambivalence about female values and work is best summarized by several questions. Do we want to reinforce girls' concern with caring and responsiveness or do we want to redirect their interests? Does improving girls' economic status require that we denigrate their growing awareness of the importance of interdependence and caring? Do they need to devalue nurturing in order to enter the world of men and compete successfully for scarce dollars?

What is our message to girls? Are we saying, "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" or are we saying, "Vive la difference?" or are we saying both? What do we want to say? What do we want them to hear? If we are finding a lot of ambivalence and confusion in girls and young women these days about their aspirations and expectations regarding work, it is little wonder. The messages are murky. At this point they may be as cruelly misleading as the Cinderella myth.

Yes, we want girls to take math and science, and we must attend to the fact that girls do well in math and science until somewhere around the onset of puberty, when girls also switch to junior highs or high schools where math becomes an elective, and when girls do not, for reasons that are still unclear, elect to continue. Girls must learn that they are seriously foreclosing options the moment they elect not to continue in math. If any ammunition is needed to convince them, the study conducted in 1972 by Lucy Sells, a sociologist at Berkeley, is still powerful. Of incoming freshmen at Berkeley in 1972, 57 percent of the male students had four years of math preparation -- and eight percent of the female students. This resulted in the exclusion of women from 15 out of 20 possible areas of majors at Berkeley. As Sheila Tobias has been telling us for a decade, because of the direct correlation between competence in mathematics and occupational opportunities, this is an important issue.[36]

In acknowledging and insisting upon its importance, however, let us not denigrate those traditionally female professions which many of us in this room are in. Let us not wipe girls out by denying something that is very special in them, their insistence on nurturing, their utterly moral sense of the ties that bind.

So, the first source of confusion is our ambivalence about so-called feminine values and work. The second source of confusion is our failure to look at work in relation to other adult roles, including marriage and motherhood. Carol Tittle argues, and I strongly agree, that the "separation of work and other adult roles in schooling, occupational planning, and career education is particularly devastating for women."[37] Ahead lies the "superwoman syndrome," role strain at its most extreme. And the role strain is a woman's issue, for it is women who juggle marriage and motherhood and work. Bianchi

and Spain say that "studies of time spent doing housework and taking care of children continue to show that working women do the major share of household tasks at the expense of leisure and sleep time."[38] Tittle found that girls tended to overestimate the amount of time they would be out of the work force for childbearing, compared with actual Bureau of Labor Statistics data. The differences between the realities of women's labor force participation and their expectations in 11th grade are certainly important points for counseling. But what exactly, will we counsel?

I'll tell you what I think. The heat's on, and it's on girls only. Ask boys to fill in a time line of the major events they anticipate in their lives in the areas of career, marriage, and family, and they have little trouble. Ask girls, and they fall apart. I think they fall apart with reason, not because they are passive or dependent. I think they fall apart because something inside them already knows that, if they are to do it all, there will be no sleep, let alone leisure time.

Let me illustrate the heat that's on girls by telling you about research being conducted by Jane Traupmann and her colleagues, again at Wellesley's Center for Research on Women. As part of the research, they looked at the extent to which little boys feel it is okay to do girls' things, and vice versa. They set up props that indicated traditional female and male occupations and family roles. They brought each child individually into a laboratory situation in the school and offered them more money (two nickels) for being photographed in cross-gender situations than in the same gender situation, which was worth only one nickel. Girls took the money and crossed. They were more flexible and comfortable in cross-gender role situations than boys were. So, they posed with a football or with tools for repairing a car or as an airplane pilot. Boys, especially for some reason fourth-graders, almost never took the extra nickel.[39] They may want to make money, but they just will not pose with a mouse doll in a little bonnet.

What does this imply? That girls will sell out for five cents but boys can't be bought? I think not. I think it tells us that pressure is on girls to change, that the price of their adopting traditionally masculine roles is less than the price of men's adopting traditionally feminine roles. It tells us that the heat's on the girls right now to decide whether to take the extra nickel, and if they take it, they will have to do it all somehow, and they will be on their own to figure out how. We are telling girls that we value cross-gender aspirations. That is like saying we believe in desegregating schools, and then putting only the black students on the bus. It is also like saying we believe in desegregation, busing black kids crosstown, but not caring about what happens to them when they get off the bus. When girls get off this bus that we are putting them on, the reward may be twice the nickel and half the sleep.

As you can see, I have backed myself into two dilemmas in looking at this issue, and I must confess to you that I cannot work my way out of them. One pertains to nurturing, the helping professions, and what we say to girls about their strengths in relation to traditional

female work. The other pertains to the patterns of women's lives as they juggle marriage, motherhood, and work. It is not my job, thank goodness, to make recommendations. That is your job. I'm supposed to lay out the issues. You are supposed to help resolve them. For that, I am grateful. Certain things are very clear to me, nonetheless.

Let me list a set of simple statements to get you started:

Most women work outside the home.

- Many women want to work.
- Girls and women have limited sights about work options.
- The work experience of most adolescents is not productive, not educational, and not rewarding.
- We provide few opportunities for young people to participate in their communities in roles that might expand their horizons.

Girls go to school.

- In school, girls make crucial decisions that can have lifelong impact on their career satisfaction and earnings.
- In school, girls are often not counseled about as many occupational options as boys are.
- In school, girls are not given the multiple on-the-job experiences combined with career counseling that they need so badly.

Girls hold values that influence their decisions.

- Values about work, marriage, and motherhood are in flux during adolescence.
- Girls do not necessarily hold the same values that boys do about work, marriage, and parenthood, nor is this difference necessarily a weakness in girls to be remedied.
- Our messages to girls about work, marriage, and motherhood are mixed and sometimes contradictory.
- Girls need counseling about occupational roles in relation to their values about marriage and motherhood.[40]
- Girls need constant counseling from parents, school counselors, the clergy, the media, and youth workers in after-school programs that gives them what one person calls an "affirmative action childhood,"

> counseling about changing women's roles and their potential for living lives of worth, dignity, independence[41] -- and interdependence.

That is my list of "simple" statements. I am left, now, with three points to make.

First, as Mary Ellen Verheyden-Hilliard says, "Somehow it seems almost subversive to educate girls for financial independency."[42] We must become subversive, then. The statistics about the feminization of poverty compel us to be adamant about change.

Second, we are asking girls to make clearheaded and realistic decisions that have lifelong consequences during adolescence, a highly charged stage in their lives. We need to figure out ways to make them aware of the many options opening before them. We need to keep them from making irrevocably negative choices. We also need to figure out ways to buy some time for them, to get them to delay some choices, and to give them an opportunity to sort out, reject, and synthesize for themselves the many messages they receive.

Third, maybe after we have done what we can for girls and women, if we are very clever and very persistent and very kind, we will be able to allow boys to be more like girls and men to be more like women. For in the end, nothing short of that will be required if we are to work our way out of the dilemmas we are in.

Notes

[1] Mary Ellen Verheyden-Hilliard, "Assisting the School-to-Work Transition for Young Women: Who Needs the Counseling?", in Young Women and Employment: What We Know and Need to Know About the School-to-Work Transition, eds. Muriel Berkeley, Faye Baumgarner, and Lois Morrill (Washington, D.C.: The Social Research Group, The George Washington University, 1978), pp. 38-39.

[2] Ray Marshall, Work and Women in the 1980s: A Perspective on Basic Trends Affecting Women's Jobs and Job Opportunities (Washington, D.C.: Women's Research and Education Institute, 1983), pp. 7-8.

[3] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[4] Susanne M. Bianchi and Daphne Spain, American Women: Three Decades of Change, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Center for Demographic Studies, Special Demographic Analyses CDS-80-8, August 1983, pp. 3-4.

[5] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[6] The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Teenage Pregnancy: The Problem That Hasn't Gone Away (New York: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1981), p. 7.

[7] Mark Testa and Fred Wolczyn, The State of the Child, The Children's Policy Research Project, Vol. 1 (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago, 1980), pp. 26-27.

[8] Ibid., p. 29.

[9] Bianchi and Spain, p. 6.

[10] Ibid., pp. 4-5, 10.

[11] U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. Children and Their Families, 98th Congress, 1st session (Washington, D.C.: Author, 1983), p. 22.

[12] Marshall, p. 8.

[13] Bianchi and Spain, pp. 12-13.

[14] Marshall, p. 1.

[15] Bianchi and Spain, pp. 15, 17-18.

[16] Marshall, p. 16.

[17] Alvin Rosenbaum, The Young People's Yellow Pages: A National Sourcebook for Youth (New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1983), pp. 41, 59.

[18] Hylan Lewis, "Employment for Disadvantaged Young Women," in Young Women and Employment, p. 22.

[19] Girls Clubs of America, Today's Girls, Tomorrow's Women. A National Seminar of Girls Clubs of America (New York: Author, 1980), p. 40.

[20] Carol Kehr Tittle, Careers and Family: Sex Roles and Adolescent Life Plans (Beverly Hills: Sage Library of Social Research, Vol. 121, 1981), p. 233.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 231.

[23] Bianchi and Spain, p. 26.

[24] Ibid., p. 21.

[25] Ibid., p. 22.

[26] Marshall, p. 17.

[27] Marshall, pp. 16-17.

[28] Jill Rierdan, "Becoming a Woman: The Meaning of Menstruation for Adolescent Girls," in What Do We Know About Girls? A Girls Clubs of America Special Seminar (Indianapolis: Girls Clubs of America National Resource Center, 1982), p. 8.

[29] Joan Scheff Lipsitz, "The Age Group," Toward Adolescence: The Middle School Years, Seventy-Ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 13-14.

[30] John P. Hill and Mary Lynch, "The Intensification of Gender-Related Role Expectations during Early Adolescence," in Girls At Puberty: Biological and Psychosocial Perspectives, eds. Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Anne C. Petersen (New York: Plenum Books, 1983), pp. 201-228.

[31] Tittle, p. 236.

[32] Lipsitz, p. 15.

[33] Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[34] Carol Gilligan, "Research on Girls' Development: The Persistent Omission," in What Do We Know About Girls?, p. 8.

[35] Gilligan, In A Different Voice.

[36] Sheila Tobias in Today's Girls, Tomorrow's Women, p. 55.

[37] Ibid., p. 256.

[38] Bianchi and Spain, p. 18.

[39] Jane Traupmann, "Girls Learn to Be Girls: Gender Role Flexibility and the Family," in What Do We Know About Girls?, pp. 11-12.

[40] Tittle, p. 7.

[41] Verheyden-Hilliard, p. 41.

[42] Verheyden-Hilliard, p. 38.